

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 DHA-02 PC-01 AID-05 SY-05

SSO-00 NSCE-00 MCT-01 USIE-00 INRE-00 OC-06 CCO-00

OMB-01 USSS-00 A-01 OPR-02 SS-15 NSC-05 SP-02 L-03

H-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 /073 W

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O 081421Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 834

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, PINT, ET

SUBJ: SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS

REF: A) ADDIS ABABA 10068, B) ADDIS ABABA 9949

1. AS NEARLY AS WE CAN DETERMINE, SITUATION RE THREAT TO ARREST ADVENTISTS HAS NOT CHANGED MATERIALLY SINCE THAT REPORTED REFTEL A. IN CONVERSATION THIS MORNING WITH AMCIT DR. HOLM, HE COULD REPORT NO PROGRESS FROM SDA EFFORTS TO RESOLVE MODALITIES OF PAYMENT. HE DID TELL US, HOWEVER, A) THAT ADVENTISTS HERE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO PAY ETHIOPIAN \$376,000 IN CASE (AND THEREFORE WERE PREPARED TO RISK JAIL), AND B) ADVENTISTS DID NOT GET IN TOUCH WITH THEIR HEAD-QUARTERS IN WASHINGTON SEPTEMBER 6 DESPITE OUR URGING. HOLM'S COLLEAGUE, DR. FLAIZ, DID LEAVE ADDIS THIS MORNING, AND ACCORDING TO HOLM WILL TELEPHONE HIS WASHINGTON HEAD-QUARTERS TODAY FROM PARIS. HOLM, WHO WAS MORE RELAXED THAN HE HAS BEEN, PROVIDED US WITH A COPY OF A LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 8 HE HAS SENT TO THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR (COPIES TO FONMIN, MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND EMBASSY) IN WHICH HE OUTLINES HIS SITUATION AND THAT OF SDA AS HE SEES IT, AND APPEALS FOR JUSTICE. LETTER, WHICH MAY
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OR MAY NOT BE HELPFUL, IS SIGNED BY HIM AS "A CITIZEN

OF US U.S."

2. CHARGE CALLED UPON BERHANE DERESSA, DIRECTOR, AMERICAN DIVISION, MOFA, MORNING SEPTEMBER 8 TO AGAIN EXPRESS EMBASSY'S CONCERN ABOUT THREATENED ARREST. CHARGE TOLD BERHANE THAT AS FAR AS HE KNEW, THERE WERE NO CRIMINAL CHARGES IN THE CASE, THAT HE COULD NOT SEE HOW ARREST ACTION COULD HELP MATTER, THE MORE SO SINCE HOLM HAS ALREADY BEEN TOLD HE CANNOT GET AN EXIT VISA TO LEAVE ETHIOPIA UNTIL THE MATTER IS CLEARED UP, AND THAT IF HOLM IS ARRESTED, CIRCUMSTANCES OF THIS PARTICULAR CASE COULD LEAD TO UNFORTUNATE PUBLICITY AND PERHAPS CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION IN THE U.S. THAT MIGHT NOT BE HELPFUL TO BILATERAL RELATIONS. HE ADDED THAT WHILE OTHER THREE THREATENED BY ARREST WERE NOT AMCITS, THEY WERE CAUGHT UP IN PROBLEM BECAUSE OF THEIR CONNECTION WITH AN AMERICAN ORGANIZATION, AND HE THEREFORE HOPED THAT ANYTHING BERHANE MIGHT DO TO PREVENT ARREST WOULD APPLY TO THEM AS WELL.

3. BERHANE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND WOULD TRY TO DO WHAT HE COULD. UNFORTUNATELY, HE HAD NO PROGRESS TO REPORT FOLLOWING CHARGE'S FIRST CALL SEPT. 3 (AND REMINDER SEPT. 6), AND CHARGE DID NOT LEAVE MEETING WITH FEELING OF CONFIDENCE THAT MOFA'S EFFORTS WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL. CHARGE, INCIDENTALLY, DECIDED NOT TO RAISE TALK ABOUT ALLEGED CIA CONNECTIONS AT THIS TIME DESPITE EARLIER INTENTION TO DO SO, FEARING, UPON REFLECTION THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE HELPFUL JUST AT THIS STAGE.

4. COMMENT: WE WILL CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS, BUT MEETING WITH BERHANE THIS MORNING WAS NOT ENCOURAGING. HOLM, FOR HIS PART, SEEMED RESIGNED TO A STAY IN JAIL EVEN THOUGH WE HAVE REPEATEDLY TOLD HIM WE WOULD TRY TO PREVENT IT (HE THINKS IT WOULD BE OF SHORT DURATION). WE HAVE TOLD HIM THAT IT SEEMS TO US QUESTION OF WHETHER TO PAY CASH OUGHT TO BE RESOLVED BY HIS HEADQUARTERS AND THAT WE HAVE REPORTED THEIR SITUATION TO DEPT FOR DISCUSSION WITH HIS HEADQUARTERS. HE SEEMS TO AGREE IN PRINCIPLE, BUT FACT REMAINS HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MADE LOCAL DECISION NOT TO PAY IN CASH WITH RESULT THAT THEY HAVE NOT YET INFORMED THEIR OWN HEADQUARTERS OF SITUATION. THEREFORE IF FLAIZ CALLS HIS HEADQUARTERS TODAY, WE DO NOT REALLY KNOW WHAT HIS PITCH IS LIKELY TO BE.
TIENKEN

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